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**Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453**

DCR AWARDS \$1.25 MILLION FOR PROJECTS IN THE PARKS
Agency also launches new efforts to support Friends groups across the Commonwealth

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. today announced the awarding of \$1.25 million in matching funds for improvement and enhancement projects in state parks and other facilities across the Commonwealth. The money, allocated through DCR's Partnerships Matching Funds program, will support 37 projects.

"We are absolutely delighted to be able to help fund such diverse endeavors as replacing a bridge in Upton State Forest, restoring and renovating the historic Crosby Cape house in Nickerson State Park in Brewster, and completing the restoration of four sections of the Mass Central Rail Trail in Holden and Rutland," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "These projects herald a renewed effort on the part of DCR to reach out to our Friends groups and help them do what they do best, which is support our forests, parks, and beaches."

The Partnerships Matching Funds Program was formerly called the Office of Public Private Partnerships and was administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The program moved to DCR last month, and immediately began accepting applications from Friends groups and other park advocacy groups, civic and community organizations, institutions, businesses, and dedicated individuals with an interest in improving the Commonwealth's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

Under the program, DCR considers applications that will provide a match of non-state funds for capital projects in state parks. DCR assigns a project manager to each approved project who will oversee implementation of the project in close consultation with the partners making the contributions.

The program received a record-setting 44 applications this year, four of which were encouraged to reapply next year and three of which were declined outright. Approved projects include buying and installing a flagpole for the visitors center in Lawrence Heritage State Park in Lawrence, commissioning murals designed and created by local students for the trail underpasses along the Nashua River Rail Trail in Groton, and hiring a preservation consultant to prepare the National Register nomination for Wachusett Mountain in Princeton and Westminster.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

In another move aimed at increasing DCR's support for and collaboration with Friends groups, Commissioner Sullivan said the agency has hired a new Director of Partnerships, whose job will be to reach out to Friends groups across the Commonwealth. The director will help facilitate the efforts of the Friends in state parks and align those efforts with the mission of DCR. The newly hired director, Conrad Crawford, has broad legislative and public policy experience, is an active board member of the Somerville Homeless Coalition, and is involved in issues affecting the homeless. He starts his new job on March 3.

The Director of Partnerships position is meant to strengthen DCR's relations with existing Friends groups and establish new friends groups in parks that need or could benefit from them. Crawford will work to enhance communications between DCR and Friends groups across the Commonwealth.

For more information on the Partnerships Matching Funds program, and to receive an application for Fiscal Year 2009, call 617-626-4917, or send an e-mail to ethel.stafford@state.ma.us. Information and applications also are available at www.mass.gov/dcr.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.